Bhoodan and Village Industries

Reg. No. B3092
Licence No. 13

HARIJAN

(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)
Editor: MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

Vol. XIX. No. 12 AHMEDABAD — SATURDAY, MAY 21, 1955 TWO ANNAS

INDUSTRIAL POLICY ACCORDING TO GANDHIJI

Some thirty members of the Economic Conference which was held in Nagpur (in 1938) were present at the opening ceremony of the Magan Museum. The ceremony over, Gandhiji led them in conversation saying, "I want you to criticize what you have seen, and tell me the defects you may have discovered. Praise will not help me. I know where I deserve praise. But don't tell me *ex cathedra* that the whole thing is doomed to failure, as some economists have done before. Such condemnation would not impress me. But if after a close and sympathetic study you discover flaws and point them out to me, I shall feel thankful."

"Are you against large-scale production?" they asked.

Gandhiji replied: "I never said that. This belief is one of the many superstitions about me. Half of my time goes in answering such questions. But from the scientists I expect better knowledge. Your question is based on loose newspaper reports and the like. What I am against is large-scale production of things that the villagers can produce without difficulty."

"What do you think of the Planning Commission?" was the next question.

"I cannot say anything," replied Gandhiji. "It was not discussed in my presence in the Working Committee. Because I still continue to tender advice to the Working Committee whenever my advice is sought, it does not mean that everything that emerges from the Working Committee bears my imprimatur or is even discussed with me. I have purposely divested myself of responsibility, so far as the general body of decisions are concerned."

"Do you think that cottage industries and big industries can be harmonized?" they asked.

"Yes," said Gandhiji, "if they are planned to help the villages. The key industries, industries which the nation needs, may be centralized. But then I would not choose anything as a key industry that can be taken up by the villages with a little organizing. For instance, I did not know the possibilities of handmade paper. Now I am so hopeful that I believe that every village can produce its own paper, though not for newspapers, etc. Supposing the State controlled the paper-making and centralized it, I would expect it to protect all the paper that villages can make."

"What is meant by protecting the villages?" they asked.

'Protecting them against the inroads of the cities," Gandhiji replied. "In any case, under my scheme, nothing will be allowed to be produced by the cities which can be equally well produced by the villages. The proper function of the cities is to serve as clearing houses for the village products."

"Can we harmonize the cloth mill activity with the handloom production?"

"So far as I know," he said, "my answer is an emphatic 'no'. All the cloth we need can easily be produced in the villages."

"But the number of mills is increasing," said the economists.

"That is a misfortune," said Gandhiji.

"But that is one of the things that the Planning Commission has set itself to do," they said. "It is news to me," he replied. "In that case the Congress will have to scrap its resolution on Khadi."

On the same topic, there was a discussion between Gandhiji and M. Frydman, a Polish engineer. "The ultimate ideal of having self-sufficient villages is there," observed the engineer. "But that can come about where everyone is cultured in the Indian sense of the word. Does not industrialization serve to level the ground? Is it not sheer waste of energy merely to oppose it? Would it not be better to try to change its direction?"

"You are an engineer," said Gandhiji. "You will, therefore, appreciate an illustration from mechanics. You know the parallelogram of forces. There the forces do not neutralize each other. Each force acts freely along its own line and we get the resultant which indicates the final direction of motion. It is the same with the problem you have mentioned. As I look at Russia where the apotheosis of industrialization has been reached, the life there does not appeal to me. To use the language of the Bible, 'What shall it

avail a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul ? ' In modern terms, it is beneath human dignity to lose individuality and become a mere cog in the machine. I want every individual to become a full-blooded, fully developed member of society. The villages must become self-sufficient. And I see no other solution if one has to work in terms of Ahimsa. Now I have the conviction. I know there are others who believe in industrialization. I work with all my being for my conviction. The process of adjustment goes on. I don't know what the outcome of it will be. But whatever it is, it will be to the good."

" Is no compromise with the industrialization possible without imperilling the ideal of self-sufficient villages ? " asked Frydman.

" Oh, yes," replied Gandhiji. " Railways are there, I do not avoid them. I hate motor-cars, but I make use of them willy nilly all the same. Again I dislike fountain-pens, but just now I am making use of one, though I carry a reed-pen in my box. Compromise comes in at every step, but one must realize that it is a compromise, and keep the final goal constantly in front of the mind's eye."

" When I turn from the busy West to the masses in the Indian villages," resumed Frydman, " I seem to be moving in a different world altogether in which stagnation reigns."

" Yes, so long as you look on the surface," said Gandhiji. " But the moment you talk to them and they begin to speak, you will find that wisdom drops from their lips. Behind the crude exterior, you will find a deep reservoir of spirituality. I call this culture. You will not find such a thing in the West. You try to engage a European peasant in conversation, and you will find that he is uninterested in things spiritual. In the case of the Indian villager, an age-old culture is hidden under an encrustment of crudeness. Take away the encrustation, remove his illiteracy, and you have the finest specimen of what a cultured, cultivated, free citizen should be."

(From Shri Tendulkar's *Mahatma*, Vol. 5, pp. 9-11)

By D. G. Tendulkar
MAHATMA
(Available in set of 8 Volumes)
Price Rs. 220 Postage etc. Rs. 16

By Mahatma Gandhi
BASIC EDUCATION
Pages viii+114 Price Re. 1-8-0 Postage etc. As. 6
NATURE CURE
Pages viii+68 Price As. 12 Postage etc. As. 5
TOWARDS NEW EDUCATION
Pages vi + 90 Price Re. 1-4-0 Postage etc. As. 5
DRINK, DRUGS & GAMBLING
Pages xi+175 Price Rs. 2-8-0 Postage etc. As. 14
UNTOUCHABILITY
Pages, iv+16 Price As. 4 Postage etc. As. 2
NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
P.O. NAVAJIVAN, AHMEDABAD - 14

HUNDRED YEARS AGO

[The following extracts are sent by a friend from Surat. They are from two articles that appeared under the title, " Government Connection with Intemperance " in the January and February, 1855, issues of an old magazine, *Jnan-Deepak*. The reader will note that they were written when the British rule was firmly establishing itself in India.

The argument for prohibition is very simple — the Government vends liquor or alcohol and thus makes respectable what is inherently despicable and socially bad. It must simply stop that by law. Then will flow out the innate virtues of the people, and there will be scope for reformers to work.

Will our own Governments in various States heed to this simple and direct plea and appeal that was made a hundred years ago, and is still as valid as it was then, and unfortunately needs to be repeated after hundred years and in the 8th year of our freedom ?

7-5-'55 M. P.]

(1)

" As long as the sanction of supreme authority is given to traffic in intoxicating drinks so long must these agencies labour to a great extent in vain. . . . . The simple question here is : Is this traffic an evil ? If so, it should not be regulated; it ought to be not only checked but totally removed. It would not be difficult to show that this regulating, checking system by Government licence is far more than counterbalanced by the evils which directly flow from it. This broad Government seal has rendered respectable a disrespectable calling. The Distiller, the Publican, the Toddy contractor hold public odium in defiance because they feel secure under the shield of supreme authority."

(2)

" I may traverse the whole country without witnessing a single case of intoxication, but the moment I pass over the British territory I find a marked difference. Every *bunder*, every street of every city, every village, and even hamlet bear testimony to the utter inefficiency of this so-called Government check on intemperance. Distilleries, Dram-shops, Toddy houses driving a successful trade in every direction, thousands on thousands of the people especially of the working classes habitual drinkers, thousands on thousands daily — the Sabbath not excepted — crowding to those shops which claim the protection of a British Christian Government. On witnessing such scenes as these, I cannot, I confess, discover anything in the form of a check on intemperance. I observe the poorest, the most wretched looking of the people whose daily earnings are in most cases one and a half, or two annas, regular visitors in multitudes, at the Dram-shop."

(3)

" It is demonstrable, indeed it has been again and again demonstrated, that the traffic in intoxicating liquors in this country, as sanctioned by our rulers, is a great evil — that it is proving ruinous to millions in British India. Let it not be said that by regulating and checking this traffic our rulers are doing their utmost to promote

temperance among their subjects. When the whole of this vast revenue is refused admission into the national treasury, when it is solely applied to the reformation of the people, when it is expended in the establishment of industrial and moral institutions, then this argument might have some weight. Still the principle would be unsound, because it sanctions evil that good may follow. If I pitch my neighbour into the sea that I may exhibit my dexterity, and compassion in rescuing from a watery grave, do you give me credit either for compassion or well regulated principles? No more do the upright and laudable measures of our rulers justify them in countenancing this great evil."

(4)

"The sale of intoxicating liquors under Government sanction is felt and acknowledged to be an enormous evil. Can it be lessened? Can it be removed? We answer, yes, and we maintain that the moment our Government has the *will* it may with impunity exert its power to effect this desirable end.

"We know our Government desires to promote the well-being of its people, and we rejoice that it has accomplished and is accomplishing so much, but this desire must increase in ardour. In many instances of reform, sacrifice is necessary, — present emolument must be relinquished.....

"They will cut off this occasion to intemperance, though at the expense of pecuniary loss. We do not expect them to effect a moral reformation. No human legislation can effect this; but we say let them earnestly seek and labour to effect reformation and we have faith that reformation will be the result.....

"Hence we maintain that it is their (Legislators') imperative duty to demand the cessation of this traffic, to prohibit distillation, to withdraw these licences, to proclaim their determination, to remove every occasion of stumbling, every impediment to the progress of temperance. This bears the aspect of a sweeping measure.....

"We maintain then that it is the imperative duty of our Indian Government to prohibit entirely traffic in intoxicating liquors."

(5)

"The chief question for British Reformers — for honest men is, Is this traffic a good or an evil? — Is our sanction of it right or wrong? Every observant traveller in these parts, every impartial inquirer will unhesitatingly answer, *It is an evil of vast magnitude*. Hence our reforming Government should disclaim all connection with it, and avow their determination to suppress it in every quarter."

(6)

"The use of intoxicating liquors is *contrary* to their religion. Not only would this measure be right *per se*, not only is *it* competent to our Government to enforce it without consulting the wish of a single subject, but it would be a decidedly popular measure. The poor as well as the more opulent would rejoice in it. The very victims of intemperance would thank the Government for its benign interference. The more intelligent subjects to British India would celebrate the cessation of the traffic — the death of this all-devouring monster as a Jubilee. Then would the pulpit and the press, then would education prove manifold more powerful than at present. This obstacle removed, they would produce their legitimate effect."

LACQUERED EARTHEN VESSELS

(*By S. K. Mirmira*)

Though a few years ago, earthen pots were quite commonly used among the people of India, there is gradually a contempt for the so-called crude porous pottery. This is because of the attractive and cheap metalwares. In order to feed fifteen lakhs of hungry stomachs of potters, it becomes inevitable to adapt certain methods to improve the attractive quality of the village pottery.

One among such is lacquering the porous mud vessels with shellac plus liq. ammonia solution in order to make the wares impervious. The Indian Lac Research Institute, Ranchi, has conducted an appreciable amount of experiment and found out a suitable method of applying lac on earthen wares. The method prescribed by the above institute, improves the wares in getting rid of the porosity to a considerable extent, though the lac coat is a temporary method.

During the recent Sarvodaya Sammelan at Puri, all the 7,000 delegates were supplied with lac-coated mud vessels for the use during the meals time to keep liquid food stuffs and water. Usually in such Sammelans ordinary porous mud vessels are supplied which are thrown away every time after the meal. But this time, tapping the talents of the local potters of Puri, who are inhabited in one single colony, about 15,000 pieces of mud vessels were manufactured. The technique of lacquering the wares with shellac and liq. ammonia solution was taught to the potters and with their help all the 15,000 mud pieces were lacquered in order to make the vessels impervious and good looking. Every delegate was supplied with a glass to drink water and a bowl to store liquid food stuff. Instructions were given to use the two pieces up to the end of the three-day Sammelan.

The result was quite appreciable. Even the orthodox people who have aversion towards using the same mudwares more than once, not only used the same two pieces up to the end but also carried with them those as the *prasad* of Puri Sammelan. The result of this experiment gave a chance to learn the new technique to about 50 potters of Puri. This gave them a ray of hope of survival in the horror of the centralized industries. The expenditure incurred on the whole is not more than the usual money allotted for the supply of mudwares. This is a cheap but a good process to improve porous pottery.

HARIJAN

May 21 1955

BHOODAN AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

(*By Maganbhai P. Desai*)

Shri Mulchand Agrawal from Mandsaur in Madhya Bharat raises a natural and true question. To my mind it is also fundamental. It would have been well if the Puri Sammelan had discussed it adequately. The question is this:

"In your article 'The Bhoodan Anniversary' (*Harijan*, 23-4-'55), it is stated that Khadi and village industries were associated with Bhoodan movement as its integral part. But while on the one hand Shri Vinoba often repeats that his aim is the establishment of a non-violent socio-economic order based on Bhoodan and village industries, on the other the Puri Sammelan adopts a resolution appealing to all groups of workers to give up all other activities to devote all their abilities to the Bhoodan Yajna!

"This resolution has created a misunderstanding in the minds of workers. Some assert that as the work for village industries is an integral part of the Bhoodan-Yajna movement to carry it on is assisting the Bhoodan activity. Others insist that workers should give up that work to devote their energies to Bhoodan alone."

The resolution of the Puri Sammelan is explicit. Following its appeal Shri Annasaheb Sahasrabuddhe, Shri Lakshmibabu and Shri Siddharaj Dhaddha have resigned from the Khadi and Village Industries Board. Others in other fields of work, too, are possibly thinking on similar lines.

We learn from newspapers that, prompted by a similar consideration, inmates of the Sevagram Ashram, handing over the Memorial Cottage etc. to the Gandhi Memorial Trust, left the place to join the Bhoodan movement.

But there is a difference. It is one thing to give up the work of village industries, Nai Talim etc. in which we are at present engaged to recruit into Bhoodan and quite another to do so without harming them. The action of the Sevagram Ashram inmates, follows the latter type; the question raised by Shri Agrawal applies to the former.

The minds of many others of our constructive workers must have been exercised over the problem in a like manner. I casually asked a leading constructive worker from Gujarat about it. He told me, "Why should this problem arise for those of us who are devoting all their time and energies in their respective fields? Items of the constructive programme like Khadi, village industries and such others are various facets of the total revolutionary task we have undertaken. The idea of giving them up does not appeal to me."

I believe the reply I received is correct. I also ask myself whether I, too, should give up my work for Nai Talim in the Gujarat Vidyapith and my work for the *Harijan* papers and recruit in the Bhoodan foot-marches. I do not think I should.

I believe the question is not similar to the recruitment as in the movement for Independence. Khadi, national education, village industries, Harijan service etc. are activities for the regeneration of the nation. Bhoodan is one more added to them. We must act with the *samagra seva* ideal in view that by engaging ourselves in any one of these we are seeking to establish a non-violent society. That was why Gandhiji contemplated merging all the separate institutions for constructive activities into one single organization even as he had advised the Congress to convert itself into a Lok Sevak Sangh in 1948. But before he could do it he left us. The Sarva Seva Sangh was started with the same idea in view. Just as the Congress failed to convert itself in pursuance of Gandhiji's advice we too failed to do as he desired. All constructive servants remained absorbed in their own particular activity, and failed to perceive the significance of constructive activities other than their own; nor could they realize the integral relationship one bore to the rest. The failure on our part was a sad mistake because all our various activities are but different outward forms of the one intangible ideal. This was how the idea of *samagra seva* took shape and the principle that informed our technique of service was to see the concentration of our own particular activity through an eye on the fulfilment of the whole and to serve the whole by concentrating on our own. I believe we established the Sarva Seva Sangh to work out the principle in actual practice. I will not continue this analysis further. What I wish to say in short is that we should all with single-mindedness, find the answer to the question raised by Shri Agrawal for ourselves.

It is being argued in connection with this question, as Shri Jayaprakash Narayan did at the Puri Sammelan, that Khadi did not bring about revolution, nor did Nai Talim and so we must now devote ourselves to Bhoodan so that we could have revolution through it. I do not know what meaning of revolution Jayaprakashji had in mind when he made the statement. Satyagraha or non-violence never fails; it is we who fail. This means that Khadi, village industries, Nai Talim etc. have not proved ineffective but that we have failed in giving them full trial till now. These items of the constructive programme are so interrelated that if you succeeded in one of them you succeed with the rest of them also. Even Bhoodan would be ineffective without them; it would reduce itself only to collecting funds in the form of land instead of cash. Without these items even distribution of land to the landless is not going to solve our problem. The slogan that all land belongs to God could never mean that with a view to utilize it for society we can avoid its settlement in some manner or another. What the duty of trusteeship indicates is that ownership has no meaning and that what is believed to be ownership is in truth only trusteeship. For this reason the State can claim the right to settlement

in land; and the individual will see his duty to give as gift from what he supposes he owns.

This is why I believe that it would not be proper for us constructive workers to neglect our own particular activities like Khadi, village industries etc. not only for their sake but for the sake of *samagra seva* also. We have believed, as was pointed out at the Gaya Conference, that Bhoodan work is integrally related to all the other constructive activities. Bhoodan is a new activity we have undertaken. Government, too, is carrying it on in its own way. The peculiarity of our work regarding Bhoodan lies in the fact that we go further and aim at a change of heart among the people. The fulfilment of our work lies in making the landless self-reliant not only by giving them land to cultivate but by training them in Khadi work etc. Without village industries this would be impossible. More, without village industries we cannot remove unemployment nor can we set up a proper living standard for our people. Service of the cow, service of the Harijans, service in the cause of Khadi and village industries, Nai Talim, Bhoodan work all are integral items of the programme which will lead us to the one single revolution we seek to bring about. To use the language of the Upanishads just as the four-quartered *atman* is realized in her fourth — *turiya* unmanifested state through the three manifest ones, similarly the revolution for a non-violent society can be realized through these, its quarters which are visible. But the revolution itself is the unmanifested state which inheres in them. This revolution was set going by Gandhiji long ago. It is now for us to take it to its final goal and to that end be alert enough and single-minded in our attitude to the Constructive Programme given to us by Gandhiji.

5-5-'55

(From Hindi)

SOME QUESTIONS REGARDING BHOODAN

[From Vinoba's speech delivered at Sankhchila in Orissa on 19-2-'55]

A friend has sent in some questions. The first is not a question but is rather a suggestion. He wants to learn from me why I do not call the movement by some name indicating *distribution* of land instead of calling it *bhoodan*, that is, donation of land.

Man Should always Give to Society

Distribution of land comes after Bhoodan as one of its consequences. But the duty of man — his *dharma* is to part with land he calls his own and give it to society to be shared by others. People today have fallen in the habit of collecting things for themselves and keeping them in their own possession. We intend to bring home to them their duty or *dharma* that it is not right for them to own more than they need.

Moreover they should learn that it is their *dharma* to share their possessions with others. Man, we know, cannot live and function alone by himself; he lives in society. As he does so he always takes various services from society. If, therefore, unless he adopts the practice of constantly giving something or the other to society in gratitude for the services he gets from it, society could not maintain itself.

Besides, all of us have to realize that we are not particularly obliging anyone when we part with something and give it to another. Really speaking, we have received enough and more from society already. Thus, we owe something to it. So, when in return for something we have already received and enjoyed we part with something and give it, it becomes *dan* in the true sense of the word. If we get fruits from a tree it is our duty and responsibility or *dharma* to give water to it. It is obvious we are not obliging the tree by watering it. We should maintain a constant flow of give and take between society and the individual. *Dan* or parting with something in order to give it to others makes it possible. This is why the ancient teachers in our scriptures have defined *dan* as **समविभागः**— that is proper distribution or division.

If blood instead of maintaining a constant flow were to collect in some particular part of the body the latter would not be able to maintain its health. If it circulates all through the body constantly the whole of it remains healthy. A natural arrangement for the circulation of wealth in the whole of society in a like manner has been called *dan* by the teachers in the scriptures and that is why it is believed to be a duty and responsibility or *dharma* for every individual. We should always endeavour to enhance the content and the power of the good words which are current in social intercourse. And we should never allow the meanings of such words to deteriorate. The content and meaning of the word *dan* has deteriorated these days. We have put a defective meaning on it. So that we may get stronger we have to reinforce in the word the meaning our ancient teachers had put in it.

Karma without Desire of Fruit and with It

Explaining the second question the friend says that when people give land as *dan* they do not seem to do so without any desire for reward. What they appear to do is to give expecting something in return. People seem to feel that by giving land in Bhoodan they will be having some social advantage, they will be earning good reputation. He then goes on to ask if this is proper.

A sense of doing something for another or serving others without expectation of any reward whatsoever is rare. Even persons known as great *mahatmas* have not been able to show it to the full. The mother is pointed out as an instance of service without expectation of anything in return and it is generally said that she serves her off-spring without expecting any reward whatsoever from it. It is true, the mother serves her children out of the love she feels for them in her heart to begin with, but later on is seen to begin to feel that such service should yield some return from her children, especially the sons; she feels the service should benefit her in some way or the other. If no such sense of expecting some advantage in return for her service were ever to find a place in the mother's heart she, by the very fact of having rendered service to her sons without any desire for reward, can easily earn her right to salvation.

So, we will preach to society that man's highest duty is to do good to others and not have any desire for advantage from it to himself. But if someone were to perform some good deed, say give *dan*, and were to expect earning good reputation by it we cannot at once condemn his action as irreligious or sinful. When a man establishes such reputation in society his sentiments are affected thereby and he feels encouraged to perform more good deeds. When the son performs some good deed and the mother praises him for it the former is enthused and inspired in his pursuit. This childlike tendency to be encouraged and inspired by praise is to be found in almost every person. If therefore people have some idea of earning some good reputation when they do something good we should not condemn it. We may, of course, emphasize that if people were to give up all idea of establishing a good reputation and were to go on performing good deeds without keeping an eye on the reward they would bring they would easily realize the soul. Thus, those who will pursue the way of action without any desire for the fruits thereof and those who will follow their duty in the same manner will deserve and get the highest reward. It seems to be God's own

arrangement that when people who give *dan* or perform religious duty expect to earn good reputation in society in return as reward, they do receive such rewards. That is why the Lord has assured his *bhaktas* in the Gita that they will surely receive the fruits of *bhakti* according to the sentiments and desires which inspired it. So, the sort of fruit or reward one will receive for his good deeds will depend upon his own inclination. If he performs his duty without an eye on the fruit or reward he will get the best fruit; if he does it with an eye on the fruit he will have to be content with an inferior fruit or reward.

The Aim of the Social Change

The friend introduces his third question by stating that there is more land in the Koraput district in proportion to the population, while in the Katak district there is more population in proportion to the land. He then asks how people in both these districts will get an equal share of the land distributed.

This question crops up as between one village and another, one district and another, one province and another and even as between one nation and another. In India we have more population compared to the land available to us; in Australia the population is but small as compared to the vast lands at their disposal. Here, to take an instance from among our provinces, there is a little more land in Madhya Bharat in proportion to its population, while on the banks of the Ganga there are more men as compared to the land. The friend who has sent in the question has himself given instances of districts by referring to Koraput and Katak. So also conditions vary from village to village. The main task that devolves on Bhoodan workers, therefore, is to persuade all our people to see that there cannot be any right of ownership in land; that every person who wants to serve the land by working on it himself should get it; and that in the same manner no society, no class of persons, nor even any nation has any claim of ownership in land. Mere persuasion or bringing home to people their duty in this regard, however, is not going to serve our purpose. Our work and preaching will, however, surely create the necessary psychological conditions for a social change. Let us suppose all the people in the Koraput district declare that they will have no right of ownership in the land of the district; that they are willing to give land in the district to whoever wants it; and that they will keep some for themselves and are willing to give the rest to others because they have been persuaded to believe that there cannot be any right of ownership in land. But even if people in the district of Koraput were to make such a declaration people from the Katak district will not rush in there to settle down. What is likely to happen is that if the people of the Koraput district were actually to give up their ownership of land people from the Katak district may show their willingness to migrate to the Koraput district. Then possibly we can have equal distribution. We should realize that we would be achieving something substantial if we persuade people to give up their right to ownership. We would then have taken our first step forward in the direction of our ultimate goal.

Let Land in a Village Belong to the Whole of It

People do not show their willingness at once to migrate from their own district to another to settle down. Special facilities, therefore, will have to be provided for them. Only then could they be persuaded to leave their own district to settle down in another. The main thing to do would be to provide facilities for all. In the area to which we wish to persuade people to go and settle we should not only have land to distribute, but also facilities of easy access to water so that men and women can see their way to settle there. We have realized that in order to supplement the work of Bhoodan in the areas where we have already received gifts of land as also in the areas where we hope for such gifts the problem of water-supply will have to be immediately tackled. To that end, in order to sink wells and to build bunds we will have to ask for Shramadan — gifts of labour from people in general and for Sampattidan — gifts of money from those who own it. You know that along with the Bhoodan Yajna movement we have also started movements for Sampattidan and Shramadan. Where we receive land in Bhoodan in a village we distribute it among the landless in the village itself but where a very large area, say thousands of acres, is available we, I suppose, will have to decide to distribute it among the landless who are living not only in the village itself but also among those around in the neighbouring villages. We will have to persuade as many other people as we can to settle there. All this work, of course, comes at a later stage. What we seek to do immediately, however, is to see that the ownership of land in a village is transferred to it as one entity and all the landless as well as those who have land get adequate proportion of land to work on.

The Inner Significance of Bhoodan Yajna

The fourth question is this: As the Government of Orissa own a large area of land is it not necessary to ask for it from them also in Bhoodan? Well, there is no doubt that it will be to the great advantage of the people. There is also no doubt in my mind that if Government own land which is cultivable it should be made available to the poor. We are going to make an attempt to get the land and we are confident that it will be available from the Orissa Government for the poor. But here I would plead with you to grasp fully the inner significance of the Bhoodan Yajna. The Bhoodan Yajna movement seeks to create and cultivate the independent power of the people. Such power, it is easy to see, cannot be created and cultivated unless there is a change of heart among the people and unless a tendency to give instead of to conceal what one has grows in the heart of everyone. To this end the sense of duty or *dharma* that lies dormant in every heart should be quickened into actual practice and everyone should be inspired to realize, and to act up to, his or her *dharma*. If we all act with this as the chief aim in view the thing that lies with Government will as a matter of course come into the hands of the poor.

Bhoomidan and Not Distribution of Land

What the Bhoomidan Yajna movement seeks mainly to achieve is the establishment of friendly relations based on non-violence i.e. love between those who own land and the landless in every village in this ancient land. But, if those who own land were to be miserly, were to prove heartless and if only lands owned by Government were to be distributed to the landless and the poor, it is, surely, not going to quicken a feeling of love in the hearts of the landless for the owners of land. Besides, I would like to emphasize and repeat that mere distribution of land owned by Government among the landless is not going to solve the latter's problem. For the solution of their problem the owners of land will have to do their share of giving land in Bhoodan. The chief thing to bear in mind is that the Bhoomidan Yajna movement does not merely seek to distribute land among the landless but to create a general sense of duty and responsibility or *dharma*, to liquidate the sense of possession and ownership. This is why we have called our movement Bhoomidan and not re-distribution of land.

Advancement, Material and Spiritual

The fifth is the last and the best question. It is this: Is it possible to have spiritual and material advancement together at the same time? There is no antagonism between spiritual advancement and material advancement; in fact both go together to make one perfect whole. Suppose we made arrangements to feed some hungry person. Suppose also that we made arrangements so that he gets employment and earns his living. Now, when we get him employed material advancement can be openly observed and along with it we advance spiritually because to help others find work is a great religious duty and performance of it purifies the mind. Take another instance. Suppose we served those who are suffering from illness. As a result of the service rendered persons suffering from illness will get better and employ themselves in the work before the

nation. Now this clearly means we have progressed materially but as along with it service to the nation is rendered the minds of all concerned are purified so that we progress spiritually also. This analogy applies as much to society as to the individual. Suppose, India began to entertain ideas of exploiting other countries in order to enrich itself. This may lead to India's material progress but along with it would work for her spiritual fall. And where there is spiritual fall material advancement would also be short-lived, because such a state of affairs will give rise to wars between nations and to a general set-back in material conditions. These instances should prove to you that spiritual and material advancements are closely related to one another and that true progress could only be spiritual to which the material one is added.

As a consequence of the Bhoodan Yajna ideal and movement people will be cultivating virtues which is spiritual progress of the people. When also as a result of the Bhoodan movement land will be distributed among the landless and the poor they will work on it with great love and enthusiasm to give us more production of wealth, which would mean our material advancement. It is the peculiar beauty of the way of *bhakti* that when man surrenders even his worldly acts to God in a spirit of worship he earns spiritual merit as also material along with it. If whatever we do we do for the sake of God we combine without our knowing it both spiritual and material progress.

(From the *Bhoodan Yajna*)

SCIENTIFIC DOGMATISM

Only a bowing acquaintance with the development of Western intellectuality is enough to make clear the fact that science has occupied varying levels of authority during the three hundred years or so of its history in the West. It began as an interloper, an invader of regions once governed by theological dictators. Its earliest representatives were made to feel the repressive power of the Church. Copernicus found his book carefully edited for "security reasons" by his printer. Galileo was hounded by the Inquisition into withdrawing his evidence for the heliocentric system, and prudence caused Descartes to ignore the great discoveries of the early astronomers. The seventeenth century, however, brought Isaac Newton and the final vindication of the Copernican theory. The next two hundred years were spent in consolidating the authority of scientific discovery and method.

In the nineteenth century, the expectation that science would eventually explain away all the mysteries of matter and life was by no means a new idea. After Darwin, a breed of scientific dogmatists gained sway over the popular realm of scientific thinking, and the mere word "science" acquired importance in the formulation of slogans. Marxism, for example, owed much of its popular success to being labelled *scientific* socialism. In the twentieth century, especially in the United States, astute practitioners of merchandising techniques turned the symbols of scientific research into icons of advertising. The test-tube and retort, the trim white laboratory jacket, the austere countenance of the man consecrated to Truth — these are symbols which have moved endless goods for American manufacturers, and are still effective stimuli to human belief in claims made in the commodity market. "Science says" has been, in short, a "last word" in compelling persuasion for at least two or three generations.

This state of mind represents a naive faith in the power and resources of science, hardly different in any significant way from naive belief in the power and resources of religion. It is a state of mind which receives from Oppenheimer an intelligent and firm rejection.

Oppenheimer's view of the role of science, as we read what he says, seems to be that it introduces a special kind of *rigour* to the study of certain areas of experience; and that while no final conclusions may result in respect to great philosophical questions, there is bound to be a transfer of both mood and discipline to other fields. It is, in brief, a valuable exercise, immeasurably productive on its own account, yet perhaps even more useful as supplying evidence of how knowledge may be acquired. But science is not a closed system of indisputable Truth — it is rather a "floating" system of disciplines and methods, to which we may refer, through which we may learn, but from which we must never gather a proud harvest of absolutes.

It is a partner in the enterprise of human knowledge, not a *bullying usurper of authority*. It is a friend of wise men who have the habit of deliberate uncertainty, and a teacher of all those who are determined to know for themselves.

(From *Manas*, July 28, 1954)

VILLAGE INDUSTRIES AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

(*By V. L. Mehta*)

No student of India's rural economy can fail to take note of the havoc that has been wrought by the decay of our village crafts and industries. Upon the factors, political and economic, that have been responsible for this disruption of our economy, it is needless for our present purpose to enlarge here. The direct outcome has been for people to crowd on the land and to create a disequilibrium between agriculture and industry. Rural communities, as a consequence, enjoy no longer a sense of self-sufficiency, they have ceased to be self-reliant, and mutual aid has almost ceased to operate as a cementing force.

Hence it was that Mahatma Gandhi, ever since he assumed the leadership of the nation, urged us to revive and revitalize our village industries, the principal among which was, and still is, the manufacture of Khadi, the weaving of cloth on handlooms out of handspun yarn. It was this industry, more than any other, that helped to make our rural economy a balanced one and that provided employment for millions in the countryside in an occupation which involved no large outlay of capital, which called for no high degree of skill, and which could thus be practised universally. By emphasizing this, Gandhiji did not, however, exclude other rural industries, crafts and occupations suitable to the countryside,

if they could draw sustenance from local raw materials, tools, skills and labour.

Now the national policy is moulded by those who draw their inspiration from Gandhiji. In the Directive of Social Policy, the State is called upon to "endeavour to promote cottage industries on an individual or co-operative basis in rural areas". National economic policy has now to be moulded to give effect to this Directive.

One of the best ways in which this Directive can be translated into action, is to recognize the promotion of village industries, whether new or old, as an integral part of the programme for Community Project areas or under the National Extension Service. To quote the Planning Commission, "this should be as much a matter of concern as the increase of national production". But before such plans can be implemented with some prospect of success, two conditions will have to be fulfilled.

In the areas where the new plans of rural industrial reorganization operate, no scope should be allowed for the further development, much less the introduction, of mechanized industries. While the aim of the former is to provide opportunities for productive employment, the latter have the effect of adding to the volume of unemployment; while the one secures decentralization of productive effort, the other process brings about concentration of economic power.

The second requirement that has to be fulfilled is to provide facilities for imparting the simple training that is needed by the rural population before they take to the new occupations, creating, at the same time, interest in and zest for fruitful labour. For this, personnel may be available under the National Extension Scheme and among the specialists attached to the Community Project Blocks. Where this is the case, no new workers need be recruited. Arrangements will, however, require to be made to equip the entire personnel, from the top to the bottom, with the knowledge of what the village industries movement stands for and on what lines attempts should be made for revitalizing old local industries or promoting suitable new ones.

This type of vigorous organized effort is called for, first, because unless it is made there can be no significant addition to the volume of employment in industries, no appreciable increase in rural earnings and hence no rise in the standard of living of the bulk of the people. As A.E. (George Russel) aptly observed years ago: "it would be an excellent thing for humanity if its civilization could be based on rural industry mainly and not on urban industry". The integration of the programme of rural industries, in harmony with Gandhiji's concepts, in the Community Development Plans gives, to my mind, just the opportunity we need to create this very desirable pattern of rural civilization.

(Abridged from an A.I.R. Broadcast)

MAN AND THE ATOM

Speaking in New Delhi at a meeting to celebrate the birthday of Bhagawan Mahavir on April 5, the Prime Minister said that the threat to humanity by atom or hydrogen bombs could be met only by moral or spiritual strength. Shri Nehru admitted his loss of faith in the agitation for banning experiments or use of these weapons. The Prime Minister said that previously he had called for such a ban but it had not succeeded.

But when we advise the world to adopt the Gandhian remedy we should be clear on two points or perhaps two aspects of the same point. There is no remedy against the hydrogen bomb which is not at the same time accepted as a remedy against other seemingly lesser forms of the evil of violence. The hydrogen bomb is only the end-result of a certain process or rather a complex of processes. Unless this complex, which affects the social organization at innumerable points, is suitably changed the problem will not be solved. In one sense, there is too much preoccupation with the question of the hydrogen bomb as if this could be solved by itself without fundamental changes in other spheres. It seems too many people are thinking of the pound when they are not careful about their pennies. They forget that it is the pennies that make the pound. It must be remembered that when Gandhiji gave us the doctrine of non-violence there was no atom or hydrogen bomb. He was not concerned with the question of the continuity of the existence of the human race. It was not his concern to see that the human race should continue for ever. His concern was that man, so long as he existed, must live a truly human life. That is why Gandhiji insisted on non-violence and also on that non-violence implied a certain way of life.

There could be no non-violent society unless man lived and worked in a humane manner and there was a bond of sympathy not only between man and man but also between man and other sentient beings. Life is to be seen and regulated as a whole and not in watertight compartments.

(From *Vigil*, April 9, 1955)

CONTENTS

		PAGE
INDUSTRIAL POLICY ACCORDING TO GANDHIJI		89
HUNDRED YEARS AGO		90
LACQUERED EARTHEN VESSELS	S. K. Mirmira	91
BHOODAN AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES	Maganbhai P. Desai	92
SOME QUESTIONS REGARDING BHOODAN	Vinoba	93
SCIENTIFIC DOGMATISM		95
VILLAGE INDUSTRIES AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	V. L. Mehta	95
MAN AND THE ATOM		96

Subscription Rates — Inland: One year, Rs. 6; Six months, Rs. 3; Foreign: One year, Rs. 8 or 14 s. or $2.
Printed and Published by Jivanji Dahyabhai Desai, Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad 14.